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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3867
INFO RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE
RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 002477

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E (FIERST AND WALSH), AF/RSA DEPARTMENT
FOR PM/PPA (HOPKINS), NAIROBI FOR SOMALIA UNIT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [UK](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA: PM OUTLINES TFG PLAN FOR STABILIZATION
AND UNITY

REF: LONDON 2435

11. (SBU) Summary. Somali Prime Minister Abdirashid Ali Shamarke defended the strength of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and outlined its plans to bring unity and peace to Somalia in an October 28 speech in London. The Prime Minister asserted that his government intends to expand its legitimacy by providing basic services, combating extremism and providing an alternative to illegal activities such as piracy. He stressed the need for Somali fishing rights to be recognized and argued that this would provide an economic alternative to piracy and serve as an additional source of revenue for the TFG. He further addressed the need for the TFG to bring unity and stabilization to all regions in Somalia and oversee investment and international relations. The PM said he would do everything within his power to aid the UK government in freeing the recent UK citizens kidnapped off the Somali coast. In a separate briefing for diplomats, Shamarke stressed the urgent need for support, including for a DDR program, as a means of winning "political opportunists" over to the TFG. End Summary.

TFG Plans for Stabilization and Unity

12. (SBU) In an October 28 speech in London, Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Shamarke outlined his Government's plan to bring stabilization and unity to Somalia. The Prime Minister defended his government as "strong, determined and unified" and argued that implementation of its stabilization plan will "bring renewed unity" to all regions of the country. He noted that Somalis must see a strong unified government and have "confidence in their alternatives" before the "dominant problem" of extremism will subside. Shamarke admitted there were difficulties in bringing together the regions of Somalia but stressed that he has received support from the people in every region he has visited and said that the lives of all Somalis are "intertwined," arguing for a federal system. He further addressed the need for the federal government to oversee investment, to manage development aid, and to deal with the international community's concerns.

13. (SBU) Shamarke stated that the TFG is "pulling together scholars" from the Diaspora community to address basic issues beyond security. The Prime Minister asserted that the TFG intends to "expand its legitimacy" by providing basic services. He was optimistic in the future of government institutions and asserted that once "political aspects" are addressed, the TFG would function more efficiently. He cited recent difficulties handling drought conditions as an example of the need for a strong unified government, and noted that Somalia has effectively handled droughts before. He also addressed the need for better education and to "educate against Wahhabism," asserting that we "cannot confront (extremism) with just guns."

14. (SBU) In a separate briefing for diplomatic representatives, Shamarke said he wanted to convey a "sense of urgency." A power-sharing agreement, without wider agreement on policy, was merely a "quick fix." Shamarke was seeking support for a broader, two-year stabilization process. Asked whether his government would last that long, Shamarke argued that "the storm is behind us." Sharmarke linked the need for the government to deliver economic opportunity and services in order to extend its control, and advocated a DDR program that would encourage "political opportunists" to support his government. Shamarke questioned why the international community viewed DDR as a "post-peace" program; in his view, it was needed earlier.

Extremism

15. (SBU) Shamarke focused his remarks on the need to provide an economic alternative to extremism and piracy. He noted that while Al Qaeda and like groups recruit actively in Somalia, the majority of extremists come to Somalia from abroad seeking a "Jihadi haven." He suggested that the most effective way to eliminate extremism is through tackling poverty and the "lack of governance." The PM suggested that the Somali insurgency is strong but not "invincible."

16. (SBU) Shamarke told diplomatic representatives that Al-Shabab's movement was divided into three groups: a) core advocates, with a broad agenda beyond Somalia's borders; b) "political opportunists" who could change if provided with economic opportunities; and c) those with foreign

LONDON 00002477 002 OF 002

affiliations. For groups a and c, the only solution was a military one. Pressed on relations with Somaliland, Shamarke said he was seeking stronger ties, though it was a "difficult period." But while the two differed on their views of Somalia's future, over the long term their interests were intertwined. Shamarke suggested the "best hope" was a federal system that protected local identities.

17. (SBU) Pressed on relations with Ethiopia, Shamarke told diplomatic representatives that intervention would only complicate the situation. Somalia had not requested it, and had no intention of doing so. However, the two shared a long border, and it was in Ethiopia's interest to have a stable Somalia; the insurgency was targeting not only Somalia, but also Ethiopia, and Yemen. Shamarke noted military training opportunities, but stressed that he wanted to have the capacity for training Somalia's forces in-country.

Piracy and Fishing Rights

18. (SBU) Shamarke downplayed the importance of piracy, asserting that it was merely a "criminal activity" caused by a lack of economic alternatives. He further asserted that piracy is "not just caused by Somalia" but that the "huge amount of illegal fishing" off Somalia's coast "drives people to piracy." He suggested the TFG needs an ability to regulate its coastal waters and noted that fishing is "the way out of poverty" for his country, emphasizing its economic importance for both individuals and the TFG. He suggested that the amount of revenue lost in taxes on fishing rights is "ten times the cost of our plan for stabilization" and that the "lack of respect" for Somali fishing rights was a significant hindrance to progress in his country. The PM said he would do everything within his power to aid the UK government in freeing the recent UK citizens kidnapped off the Somali coast, a promise subsequently covered by UK media.

International Support and Investment

19. (SBU) Shamarke stressed the importance of investment for

Somalia, stating that "we seek investors, not donations."
The PM acknowledged the TFG's need for the assistance of the international community, specifically mentioning support from the EU in Brussels, which was the next stop on his trip. He addressed difficulties the international community faces in supporting his government and cited the image left by his predecessors as his biggest obstacle. He highlighted the need for stability in Somalia and stated that the "cost of doing nothing is far greater than assisting the government." Although he welcomed the assistance of AMISOM, he warned that "we do not want to be policed from afar" by those who do not understand Somalia's difficulties.

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